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Sarah Stelfox



The impact of a friend shaving her head to support a cause really affected me. So despite the unexpectedly good outcome of my mom not losing her hair during chemo I still chose to move forward and shaved my head. Even before my mom was diagnosed with cancer I had already begun heading down the road of examining how my hair defined me. I wondered about the correlation between hair and identity, and was running a self-analysis.

I consider both Arizona and Maryland to be home, so I have both the structure and traditionalist mentality of the East, and the free and warm spirit of the West. I see value in each lifestyle, and that contributes greatly to the open-minded aspect of who I am.

I was homeschooled for the vast majority of my elementary education. My mom is a teacher and my dad is a gardener, so I spent a lot of time doing hands-on, practical type work. This infused in me a sense of independence and a love of hard work.

This homeschooling experience also caused me to wonder and dream often, and my sense of curiosity was heightened—especially when it came to people. This character trait was greatly emphasized once I got to Andrews University, because I realized that people did so many things so many different ways, and I wanted to know why. Why do we care about the things we care about? Why is appearance such a huge deal—especially hair? Being that Andrews is one of the most diverse campuses in the nation, I got to explore this concept at a highly saturated level.

I wondered: If hair was such a big deal, both culturally and in terms of gender and beauty, then what would happen if I took it away? What did my hair really mean to me? I wanted to know.

So on January 10 of this year I took the plunge. I shaved my head. Ultimately, I'm glad I made the cut when I did and I have absolutely no regrets. I now know that I don't need hair to feel beautiful, and my identity is founded in exponentially more than my appearance. I do think that appearance, and hair in particular, do play a role in our identity, but it's so much easier for me to look at people now and quickly remember that what we see is really only the tip of the iceberg in seeing who we are.

My time as a bald woman was one of the most beautiful times in my life, and gave me an understanding of beauty far beyond society's shallow outward appraisal of it.